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WHITTLINGS OF A DREAMER

BY

FREDERICK SCHENCK SCHLESINGER

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FREDERICK SCHENCK SCHLESINGER

NEW YORK
JAMES T. WHITE & CO.
1920

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SEP 27 1920

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CONTENTS

PROEM 9
DEDICATION 11
THE IDLER 15
AMERICA, MY HOME 16
COULD YOU SING, LITTLE BIRD 17
WAFT ME A SONG 18
THE GIFT 19
THE COYOTE AND THE ECHO 20
THE HYDRA 21
THE GREAT OUTDOORS 28
ON PROHIBITION 29
THE VISION OF MY DREAMS 30
WHEN I GAZE IN YOUR EYES 31
MY ANNIE 32
THE MEMORY OF MY ANNIE 33
ON IRISH FREEDOM 35
ON THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS 36
ROMANCE 37
A SUMMER DAY 38
CHILDHOOD 39
THE EYE OF GOD 40
STARS 41
FAITH 42
THE DEMOLISHED CITY 43
HER TRIVIAL LOVER 44
WHY? 45

CONTENTS—*Continued*

AMBITION 46
THE CHILD 47
FANCY 48
TOY WORLD 49
THE LAND OF WONDER 50
THE SEASONS 51
SORCERY 54
CUPID'S GARDEN 55
TO MUSIC 56
BROADWAY PERCY 57
THE DAWN 59
CIVILIZATION 60
WAR 61
AFTER THE BATTLE 62
FRIENDSHIP 63
THE SEA 64
THE COURSE OF DIANA 65
HERE'S TO WOMAN 66
THE BALLET 67
MY LOVE 68
THE FOOL 69
THE PERFECT DAY 70
THE MAIDEN OF THE SPRING 71
TAKE ME AWAY 72
HEREAFTER 73
LOVE'S UNION 74
THE CYCLE 75
THE ROSE AND THE THORN 76

CONTENTS—*Continued*

JUSTICE 77
THE VOYAGE 78
THE WAVE AND THE SEA 80
OVERHEARD IN THE ROSE ARBOR 81
NATURE'S FAREWELL 82
TO A LADY'S EYES 83
SPAIN 84
THE SERENADER 85
WEARY OF THE WORLD 94
L'ENVOI 95

PROEM

Should your lonely heart enjoy
Something that shall please it well,
Go and seek the whittling boy;
What he whittles he will tell.

In these pages—as in life—
On an old stone wall, it seems,
Sits he with a rusty knife,
Whistlin' and a-whittlin' dreams.

DEDICATION

To her who ever shall most understand
My innermost feeling, thought and fond desire;
To her who nursed and still refeeds the fire
Of good-intent within my breast; whose hand
Is ever near to help or reprimand,
Or point the way, or raise up from the mire,
Or to encourage onwards to aspire
And climb the mountains towards the promised land;
To whom I owe my body, heart and mind,
My eyes, my lips and every part of me;
To her who led me while Youth still was blind,
And, as I wiser grew, taught me to see;
To her who gave me birth, and to no other,
I dedicate this book—to my dear *mother!*

WHITTLINGS OF A DREAMER

THE IDLER

I'm an idler, so they tell me,
And I haven't an excuse.
Nothing ever yet befell me,
So my life is not much use.
But the sun is always shining,
And the songster's in the tree;
Though a world of hearts is pining,
Care has never come near me.

I'm a sluggard in the grasses;
I'm a turtle in the sun,
And I breathe the wind that passes,
And don't envy anyone.
For the sun is always shining,
And the songster's in the tree;
Though a world of hearts is pining,
Care has never come near me.

AMERICA, MY HOME

America, never did I know until
I crossed the sea, what love for you I bore.
I hoped to find upon a foreign shore
The Eldorado of my dreams. But still
What man e'er had the power to fulfill
All that he felt his heart was longing for?
When I returned and found my home once more,
The hearth blazed warm; the world had ceased to chill.
Again, America, nestled on your breast,
I vowed that never more my heart should stray,
And when the sun had vanished in the west,
Contented still within your arms I lay.
Yet had I never from your bosom flown,
My love for you I never would have known.

COULD YOU SING, LITTLE BIRD

Could you sing, could you sing, little bird in the tree,
Could you sing of the joy in my heart,
World would listen aghast to the first throb of glee,
And say genius inspired your art.

Could you love, little bird, could you love, could you
love,
With the passion that sings in my breast,
The angels would turn pale in heaven above
On hearing a song so blest.

WAFT ME A SONG

Waft me a song from the city of dreams,
Ere the flames mow it down in the west;
Blow me a melody, woodlands and streams,
That shall echo awhile in my breast!

Tonight I am weary; I smile with a sigh,
While I languish in memories dear.
Silent and sad gleams the tear in my eye,
And a voice whispers love in my ear.

Send me a song on the back of a wind,
Some rhythmic companion of dreams—
Music caressing, erotic and kind,
Born of the woodlands and streams!

THE GIFT

Accept the heavens for a gift from me!
Astronomy shall be your spacious book;
The sparkling stars shall be your jewelry;
And if upon the moon you fain would look,
A poet would be envious of your dreams.
If wearied, sink within this couch of clouds:
A cap of foam on airy seas it seems
To drift through endless space, while dusk enshrouds.
My bride shall in the Milky Way be dressed,
Shall from the Garden of the Rainbow choose
The flowers for her breast she likes the best,
Shall for her ring the sun's bright halo use.
Though I possess no wealth, save honest thrift,
Who would decline the *heavens* as a gift?

THE COYOTE AND THE ECHO

Oh, I am a coyote, lonely tonight,
  Wailing my love to the moon!
Your smiles are the moonbeams fickle and bright,
  And your voice is a coveted tune.

Ah, if you have pity on me tonight,—
  The lone coyote upon the hill—
You will answer my call from your heavenly height
  When all is forgotten and still.

For my heart is lonely and somber and sad,
  And the country is somber and still;
And I long for a something I never had—
  On my haunches upon the hill.

So answer—answer—answer tonight
  From some vagabond cloud of the sky
While I yearningly dote on the moonlight bright
  And I woefully wail and cry!

THE HYDRA

The sea is breathing like a sleeping God—
Its breast is heaving; heaven 's bathed in blood.
The wind is moaning like an agony,
That from the heart of man flees out to sea
And wanders waywardly upon the deep,
Till fog approaching, Neptune falls asleep.
Long as I can recall I've loved you, Sea!
When but a youth I tumbled blithesomely
Among your romping billows. My sole wish
Was to be near you as the sportive fish
That darted in your depths. Your vast expanse
I've ever mused upon with gaze askance.
With dreams I filled your awesome vacancy,
And loved the spell of your monotony.
But most I loved you always, human Sea,
For your resemblance to the heart of me!
Beneath your waves (imagined I) I saw
All human passions that defy the law.
In place of my reflection I perceived
A hideous face, whose mouth gaped, I believed,
To gobble in my soul. This fiend was life!
His bulby eyes, they pierced me like a knife;
His nose distorted was; his yellow skin
In folds it hung; and hideous was his grin.
Yet was a beauty in this formless shape,

That looked up at me with its mouth agape;
A hint of virtue, truth and honesty;
For life has good and bad, it seems to me.

Columbus trusted you—gave you his hand,
And, Sea, you led him towards God's promised land.
Columbus braved the monsters of the deep.
Sea-dragons, hydras—they were lulled asleep.
Adventurously—fearlessly he faced
All dangers, for in you his faith he placed!
And gratefully you served him in return,
Guiding him on towards all his heart could yearn—
Towards that fair Eden of the setting sun,
America—of all the fairest one!

On ocean's waste a ship is tossed and tossed—
A speck upon the infinite—a lost
Dark soul that wanders on through space and on
Forever and forever and anon.
Who would have thought a play could acted be
There in that boat that plunges on the sea?
Yet tragedy occurs now on the deck
Of that slow-moving, lurching ship—that speck
That bobs and bobs on the colossal deep
Or breathing breast of a great God asleep.
The Hydra in his cabin sat at home
Upon the sea, and oft his glassy eyes would roam
Towards something on the table at his side,
Toward which his hand, swift as a snake would glide.

Then quaffing the dark fluid down he'd gaze
Before him like a man within a daze.
The Hydra he was called by all, for he
Was feared as was that monster of the sea.
He many years a seaman was and knew
The duties well of each man of his crew.
His speech was curt, but every word was law;
His eye was keen, first to dissect a flaw;
His fist like silent wrath seemed when it spoke;
His mouth severe had never told a joke;
His forehead stern, in anger became mad;
His soul was bitter, cruel—men said bad.
This monster had aboard a prisoner.
A child she was, and he had shanghaied her.
Her hair was yellow as the autumn fields;
Her lips were red as juice the grapevine yields;
Her eyes were pools, reflecting dreams of love;
And Virtue fair, descending from above,
Inhabited her soul in preference
To heaven, showing much intelligence.

The Hydra on the table clinked his gold,
For sordid was his heart as it was cold.
His glutting eyes upon the treasure lay,
And rolled. His lips were white; his head was gray.
Was Life this treasure on the table spread
And was *he* Death that on that treasure fed?

"Cast her into the deep when far she sails.
The waves that dance o'erhead shall tell no tales,"

Had said a bearded visage on the shore.
"When you have done, of gold you shall have more."

The Hydra asked no questions, but the gold
He took, and placed his captive in the hold.
Then out to sea he raced. The winds blew cold,
But ne'er he winked an eye, for he was brave
And loved the dangers of the ocean wave.
To hate fair women taught a bitter past
That drove him to a life before the mast.
One face he loved: one face he now despised!
That he had ever loved would have surprised
All men. Yet in this beast had always been
A human soul, once visible, now unseen.
This captive that he bore upon the billow's breast—
Too fair was she; therefore a thing unblest.
Her golden hair he'd turn into real gold;
Her youth he'd give up to the ocean old;
Her eyes he'd blind within the foaming wave;
Her beauty soon should grace a watery grave!

He lifted to his lip the dark brown glass
And through the gold his fingers he let pass.
Then leaning back he laughed long in his chair,
And showed grim wrinkles carved by bitter care.

"Bring in the puny girl to me," cried he.
"She'll say her prayers! We'll cast her in the sea!"

To him the little trembling maid was brought;
And there were signs to show how she had fought—
A great round tear upon her sweet cheek rests,
And her thin dress is torn half from her breasts.

"Get down," the Hydra laughed, "and grovel here
In prayer! The ocean wave shall be your bier.
Your God can't help you, since 'tis *I* who will
That God himself shall with his ocean kill!"

"Help! help! Have mercy" cried the desperate child.
Suppose *you* had a daughter meek and mild
Like me! Would you have her cast in the sea?
Take pity on *her* innocence and me!"

A sudden cloud passed o'er the Hydra's brow,
And less austere appeared his countenance now.
The change was fleeting, for his face once more
The burden of a cruel evil bore.

"Take her away to perish in the foam!"
He roared. "The reefs of coral be her home!"

The Hydra in his cabin left alone
Lists to the winds that outside shriek and moan,
And now his wandering eye rests evermore
Upon a glittering object on the floor.
Is that a star there on the creaking boards
That glitters? Or a beam, flashed from the hoards

Of gold that on the rugged table shine?
Once more the winds out in the open whine.
'Tis neither star nor sun's refulgent gleam;
Nor is it but a stupid drunkard's dream.
That sparkling object on the cabin floor
Is a gold locket that a woman wore.
The Hydra stooped and raised the object small,
Then gazed up at his shadow on the wall.
Slowly he opened now the little case,
And strange emotion darted o'er his face.
A picture small disclosed was to his view—
A woman's face—a woman that he knew!

As he on that familiar countenance
Directed long his bitter, backward glance,
His false love's face and his youth's face he sees
Within the mirror of his memories.
She was a Spanish dancer in Seville;
He but a boy that at her feet did kneel.
She loved him till, when gold he had no more,
She loved another, and she cast him o'er.
He fled to sea; resolved with breath profane
To never know a woman's face again.
Forget he could not, but he still could hate
And in the devil's eyes be labelled great.
Now once again this woman's face comes back.
Why does it rise before his eyes? Alack!
Whose property could be this locket small?
Again appears his shadow on the wall.

The truth dawns on his frightened, feverish mind.
He shrinks away. Outside there shrieks the wind.
Belongs the locket to the gold-haired child?
The Hydra groans; his eyes are gleaming wild—
"She is my daughter whom I hurl from me
Out to the hungry waves and moaning sea!
God, You and all your angels I defy!
The wave I conquered and I'll rule the sky!"

A roar of thunder peals in heaven now.
Clouds in the sky and o'er the Hydra's brow
Are gathering. The breezes madly blow,
And mountains on the ocean bigger grow.
The thunder crashes and a lightning streak
Shatters the doors that on their hinges creak.
The Hydra stumbles out into the storm.
"Stop! Stop!" shrieks he. "Hear me!"

Crushed is his form.
The child fast disappears beneath the wave.
Too late he raised his hand—too late to save!
Dead on the deck the Hydra's body lay,
Struck by a bolt from heaven. Blazes day!
The storm has passed; the sea again is calm
And quiet as a peaceful, holy psalm.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Where the wild ducks race o'er the frozen sound,
There's where I love to go;
Where the tempest snores and roars around,
And the rocks are white with snow.

Where the mountains giant angels seem,
And the bear is in his den,
And the wild, wild world is a wild, wild dream,
I'll go from the haunts of men.

I'll leave the road and the tracks of man,
And I'll leave the valley below;
I'll climb the heights, for I know I can,
And away from the world I'll go,

Out—out into space where I can live
Inhaling the universe;
Out—out next to God where I can give
More than I have in my purse!

ON PROHIBITION

Prophetic torch shine ever bright!
Great book of wisdom, praise to thee!
I dreamt that fiends came in the night;
Destroyed thy statue, Liberty.

Am I the master of myself,
Or but a governmental slave?
Now Freedom's dusty on the shelf;
Democracy rots in the grave.

May Law's unbalanced scales control
Free passions in the heart of man?
Man is the master of his soul,
And has been since the world began.

What if he choose to quaff the juice
That oozes from the sun-baked grape?
He need not let his passions loose,
And turn a flabby, glutton shape.

What though indulge he to excess?
If he can not his passions rule,
His fate's deserved. Let Law repress!
'Twill make no wise man of a fool.

THE VISION OF MY DREAMS

One night in dreams a vision came to me.
Her fluctuating tresses streamed adown
Her back, now black as night, now golden as the dawn.
Like gently-heaving waters her fair form
Pulsated, and her draperies hung like mist
About her, or streamed o'er her breasts and limbs
Like lovely waterfalls. Her eyes were dark
As death, yet radiant as dreams and stars,
And bottomless too as infinity.
She walked not, but reclined upon the wind.
She spoke not, for her glance told everything.
I felt her breasts, when I embraced her, burn.
Her kiss drove pain into my heart. I shrieked!
I held now an old woman in my arms;
Now but a child, and now a virgin fair;
Now a voluptuary passionate;
Now a deformed, demonic creature; now
An angel; now a woman, now a beast.
The ages cried out in our beating hearts.
Our souls pervaded all eternity.
"Who are you, vision of my dreams?" I cried.
"I love you." And she said, "I am the world."

WHEN I GAZE IN YOUR EYES

When I gaze in your eyes, then I sit by the sea,
And oh, every wave's like a dream rolled to me;
I 'neath palm trees recline in a tropical land,
And make gods out of clouds as I fumble the sand.

MY ANNIE

My Annie's locks are silver as the sheen
The moon is casting on a peaceful sea.
My Annie's aged eyes have lately seen
The mystic things we mortals can not see.
I held her hand, and God was standing near.
Both He and I were watching that dear face.
I kissed her heart, and vainly fought a tear,
And prayed she'd be rewarded in that place
That lies beyond the circle round us all.
The days came back like echoes through the hills,
Arose like ghosts attendant to my call,
And there I was in curls and baby frills,
And Annie, who had nursed me since a boy,
Enfolded me and filled my heart with joy.

THE MEMORY OF MY ANNIE

I stopped before a grassy mound.
Ah, here my love lay underground,
Within a narrow coffin bound!
The place was not uncanny,
For though the willow sobbed above,
And moaning did the wild wind rove,
Between the grave and me stood Love—
The love I bore my Annie.

One room now 's consecrated ground;
One chair now 's ever vacant found,
And in our house there's ne'er a sound
In any nook or cranny.
For now the voice I loved is fled,
And I must weep upon the bed
Of her who I am told is dead—
My ever-present Annie.

Her heart was like the arrow, true,
Her eyes were like the heaven, blue,
And anything for love she'd do.
Like her there are not many!
So now that Death has come to stay
He'll be beside me night and day;
But Death can never take away
The memory of my Annie!

ON IRISH FREEDOM

Oh Erin, were affection's songs
  So strong as the desire,
I should condemn proud England's wrongs
  With more than sacred fire.

But I can never sing thy praise,
  Oft so much sweeter sung
By one whose fame ne'er ceased to blaze,
  E'en when death's knell had rung.

Immortal Moore, thy melodies
  Still echo through the years;
Dead birds sing in departed trees,
  And move new worlds to tears.

Arise, oh dust, out of the tomb,
  And fight for freedom's cause!
Shall slavery be Erin's doom?
  Or shall she make her laws?

ON THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Arise now Lincoln from the dust,
And raise a warning hand!
Speak Washington! The people trust
The father of their land.

Ye who the declaration signed,
That made a country free,
Give back to us your heart and mind
Ere lost is liberty.

Shall we now sell our sovereign right,
Once fought so dearly for?
Shall we yet pledge our lives to fight
Another people's war?

Endanger progress, peace and art
For foreign nations' cares?
Far safer to remain apart
And mind our home affairs!

Monroe, whose doctrine would protect
This independent shore,
Shall a staunch fortress now be wrecked,
That served so well of yore?

ROMANCE

Romance sleeps among the hills,
Embedded in her sylvan bowers;
She bathes naked in the rills,
And drowses in the cups of flowers.

Romance dreams beneath the trees,
And lolls amid the daisy meadows,
Sails upon the purple seas,
And fluctuates in lights and shadows.

Nature is her only lover,
For Man is proven most untrue;
Love, beyond the sky above her,
Created her for me and you.

A SUMMER DAY

When languid blood drifts drowsy through one's veins,
When poppied perfume hangs upon the air;
When dreamy Nature drinks the showered rains,
Or dozes in the sun devoid of care;
When day, so like a flower, softly fades,
When sunset sinks behind the hills to bed;
When fancy butterflies fold their wearied wings,
And cease to chase the sunbeams which have fled;
When busy bumblebees buzz themselves to sleep,
When zephyr breezes breathe a goodnight sigh,
When Nature drowns in the nocturnal deep,
And soothing murmurs croon a lullaby—
His love is dreaming of her lover sweet
Whose dewy kisses on her rose lips meet.

CHILDHOOD

Oh! the grasses were green in the shadowy grove!
I was sheltered from sunshine and showers;
And the dreams that I dreamt, and the fancies I wove,
Were as real as the fairies and flowers;
And my spirits were tempted to windwardly rove,
As the days were forgetting the hours.

Oh! the light in my heart burned as bright as a star,
And the music I laughed was as dear
As the echoes that rolled down the sunset afar,
And not a rose on my cheek bore a tear.
Life was sunshine, no shadow or darkness could bar;
And no older than I was the year.

THE EYE OF GOD

Come, tell me little one,
Are you greater than the sun
That lightens up our day?
And should we rather shun
The sunlight for your ray?

Sweet star, your eye is bright!
You look far out at night
Upon the sleeping world,
And see all wrong and right
When unguarded is the world.

Oh! tell me giant star,
Who are so small afar,
The secrets of this earth.
(Omnipotent guardian star!)
Its sorrows and its mirth.

I fear you, shining light;
You seem to be at night,
While looking on us here,
The eye of God of might.
I love you, yet I fear.

Thou eye of God of might,
Which sees our wrong and right,
Illuminate above!

O holy, helpful sight,
Forgive us with your love!

STARS

One night I dreamt I saw within the sky
Innumerable precious stars. It seemed
Some teaser dangled them before my eye,
Just out of reach, to show me how they gleamed.
Proud Venus! she was fairer than them all,
And beckoned me with sparkling, lustrous look.
Delusive distance lied that she was small,
Since in her eye I read a spacious book.
I grasped the glance my Venus favored me,
And climbed the skies unto her luring form;
But then I saw an ugly form had she.
So like my mind the heavens burst in storm
Till frightfully the thunder did propound,
"A star no longer is a star when found."

FAITH

I wake up every morning to wonder at the world.
The birds are singing sweetly, or martial clouds are hurled;
And, oh! I wonder, wonder at all things great and small,
The bubbles on the ocean, the God behind it all.

Ah, Faith that trusts such mystery—that is Faith indeed!
And it must follow somewhere, though there be none to lead;
The storms shall clear before it, the darkness guard the way,
And Hope and Strength attend it and guide it through the fray.

THE DEMOLISHED CITY

The domes and towers tumbled to the ground;
The streets of the great city wound and wound
Among a heap of ruins. Then a flame
Like sunset in the Orient there came,
That lapped up night and set the world aglow.
  Now ashes, darkness, smoke and cries of woe!
No more the murmuring people come and go.
Instead about like magic clouds loll dreams,
And song pulsates in deep, enchanting streams.
Desires now drift in soft, spasmodic winds,
And jealousy like streaks of lightning blinds,
And anger storms, and power crushes. Hear!
A piercing shriek! It is the soul of fear.
  But there is also generosity
Like a bright sunshine brimming all the sky,
While love and kindness fly embracing by,
And life's a dream, for cities never die.

HER TRIVIAL LOVER

Yes, he can love the butterflies
  Trembling on rainbow wings,
And he can love the pearly skies,
  And every bird that sings—
The buttercups that intertrace
  Like sunbeams in the grass,
And Nature's fair reflected face
  In lakes of looking glass;
And he can love her emerald hair,
  And love the dancing dew,
But, fairest dear, I fear—beware!—
  He never can love you.

WHY?

Why must I love that bosom more
Than any other just as fair?
Why must I kiss those lips before
Some other just as lovely pair?

Why you, prefer I to embrace
Than some as lovely other one?
Why fancy take to that fair face—
Yet just as pretty faces shun?

Why do I pine so night and day
For one who never can be true,
While I from others turn away,
Who were created false as you?

AMBITION

A swaddled baby saw a window,
And up he climbed to look outside.
He saw a giant hill before him,
And wondered 'bout the other side.

In time he came to climb the hill,
And gazed across a valley wide
To where he saw a mountain stood,
And wondered 'bout the other side.

The grown youth climbed the mountain path,
And met with a stupendous sight.
The world lay bare before his eyes!
He wished he could o'er all take flight.

He saw the world in every phase.
An old man stood, his hair turned white,
Upon a foreign mountain peak,
And wondered at the moon one night.

He raised his arms up to the moon,
And vainly tried to climb the air.
He died upon the mountain peak;
He died enveloped in his prayer.

THE CHILD

My nerves with torture flogged their humble slave,
Who dared to woo that fairest maiden—rest;
My tears impended, but my eyes were brave;
My heart alarmed beat wildly at my breast.
Man bared his soul degraded in my eyes.
Abhorring the world, from life I longed to part;
Because myself I even more despised,
And guilty conscience tore my tender heart.
Man I disliked, yet mourned my outcast state:
I, like an infidel, swore there was no God!
With bitter passion blind I cursed at fate
And the unfairness in a world at odd.
But then it was I saw a little child,
And wept until I kissed its cheek, and smiled.

FANCY

Fancy's ever roaming
Like glowworms in the gloaming.
People are like pansies,
Nothing more than fancies
Living for a little space
In the dreamer's light embrace.
See them dance about me,
Grimmacing to flout me!
Behind my back I'm laughed at,
Mocked at, sneered at, chaffed at!
They know what I'm thinking!
See them slyly winking!
What is life without me?
Buildings fall about me,
Totters down the steeple,
Buried are the people.
Is it not a pity?
Ruined is the city,
Fancy is so pretty,
Life is but in seeming—
I am only dreaming.

TOYWORLD

I often sit and dream awhile
  Of toys that talk with me,
That eat and drink, that cry and smile;
  That hear, and think, and see.

I dream, I drift so far away
  Into another world,
And there in living toyland play,
  With feet beneath me curled.

It is a planet which is hurled
  Around the golden sun,
Just like is hurled our clumsy world—
  Too big for anyone!

There castles glisten in the sun,
  There playthings walk around;
And proudly I own everyone
  Who lives upon the ground.

But then my nursie pulls my ear—
  I fall from Dream-height's brink;
And in a wink I land with fear
  Upon the earth, and think:

"I have so many wooden toys
  That don't know anything!

I am not glad like other boys,
  Since toys can't talk and sing!"

THE LAND OF WONDER

Say whither shall I wander?
Not to the orient,
Not to the sunset yonder,
Nor northward, southward bent,
But to the Land of Wonder
Where all my dead dreams went—

Where frail prismatic flowers
In boundless fields unfold;
Where light gleams on the towers,
And changes them to gold;
Where time forgets his hours,
And never will grow old.

THE SEASONS

Springtime is a child,
Decked in budding flowers,
Fresh young spirit mild,
Careless of the hours!

I've seen within the dewdrops
The sparkle of her eyes;
I've heard within the rivers
Her laughter fall and rise;

I've seen within the sunshine
The flowing of her hair,
When she among the daisies
Was dancing sweet and fair.

Nature's child is Spring,
Playful and surprising.
Hark! the birds that sing!
Spring is now arising!

* * * * *

Summer is a lover,
Rejoicing and repining,
Basking in the sunshine,
Languidly reclining.

I've drunk her dewy kisses,
That are the flowers' wine;
And sipped her honeyed sweetness
From the honeysuckle vine.

I've heard erotic music
Come from the sylvan streams,
And felt in green surroundings
Intoxicating dreams.

Nature's love is Summer!
Time forgets the hour!
Indolent young dreamer,
Is not life a flower?

* * * * *

Autumn is a jester,
Dressed in motley color;
Gay and dry old joker,
Making fun of dolor.

I've seen him in the forest,
Scarce outlined in the trees;
His bells ring in the branches
When leaves shake in the breeze;

I've seen him on the mountain
In yellow, red, and brown;

I've heard among the treetops
His laughter shaking down.

Nature's fool is Autumn,
Dancing gay and airy;
Jester of her kingdom,
Comically wary!

* * * *

In the wind she's calling.
Hear her far and wide!
She is veiled in snowflakes,
Winter is a bride!

I've seen her pale and happy
Upon a moonlit night;
I've seen her on the mountain,
All dressed in nuptial white;

I've heard her deep affection
'Neath frozen waters flow;
I've seen her in her boudoir
Upon a bed of snow.

Summer's dreams are realized;
Autumn long has tarried;
Now at Nature's altar
Winter shall be married!

SORCERY

Oh, if I gathered stars in heaven as
A child that gathers daisies in a field,
Or, went in search of all that earth might yield
In way of wild flowers, dew, and such that was—
Whatever field, or stream, or forest has!
Oh, if I caught the painted leaves that reeled
Off bowing autumn trees; and if I kneeled,
Gathering acorns, nuts, winged seeds in grass,
Pale yellow as a maiden's locks; and stole
The laughter from the brooks, the whisperings
Of invisible winds, the dreams in red hot coal,
The love within the moon, the murmurings
Of leaf and wave—and put all these to brew . . .
The product would not be so fair as you!

CUPID'S GARDEN

I trod within a visionary garden
Where Cupid ruled upon a flowery throne
In nakedness that frankly asked my pardon,
And sang of love as Pan might pipe a tone.
Then gleefully rising from his sovereign seat,
He danced beside a honeysuckle vine,
And bending kissed the tulips at his feet,
And squeezed from clustered grapes love's purple wine.
He shot an arrow to my tender heart,
It took root as a seed, and now a lily grows;
Again he sped a fiercer, sharper dart
That turned into a scarlet velvet rose.
And passion was the warmly blushing rose,
And love the lily that the wild wind blows.

TO MUSIC

O Music like the dancing leaves of trees,
O Music like the dusk of nightly spell,
O Music like the languid summer breeze,
O Music like Vesuivius spouting hell;
Are you the voice of Nature? Sing to me!
Loquacious tempests, gossiping zephyrs play
About the modest earth and naked sea,
About the hidden night and open day.
Yet you are not the soul of Nature fair,
But ugly soul of me in poverty;
You hint of wants I never knew, and tear
My heart to weariness with ecstasy.
O, Music how you sound the depths of soul,
And goad desire beyond the furthest goal!

BROADWAY PERCY

Have you heard of Broadway Percy, who was such
a dancing man?
Danced all over town did Percy, never was a baseball
fan.
Daintily he sipped his cocktail, graceful smoked his
cigarette,
As he lisped up to his partner who was called the
fair Lynette,
Oh, her eyes were dark and Frenchy and her lips
voluptuous!
She who loved this measly Percy would not even
look at us;
Stroked his hair so sleek and shiny, kissed his lips so
pale and weak,
Thought he danced the dance divinely and wore
evening togs most chic.

When they terpsichored at Rector's to a crazy, crying
tune,
Seeming like those beams that tumble down the
roadway from the moon,
Then they seemed made for each other out upon the
shiny floor—
But I never dreamt that Percy would be dancing off
to war!

Never dreamt that Broadway Percy, who was clever
at the dance,
Ever could be going over to the battlefields of
France!
But he went—and fought like blazes to the ragtime
of the guns,
And he even damned a little, and he hated all the
Huns!

So, when in the front row trenches they were ordered
"o'er the top,"
Percy did the "over" lovely, with a one-step, skip and
hop;
Poked a Dutchman in the belly, cut a mustache with
a swipe,
Stopped to blow his nose a little and his dainty
forehead wipe.

Well, to make a story shorter, Broadway Percy—let
me tell——
Singlehanded sent another bunch of German dogs to
hell!
So we hailed him as a hero, as he lit his cigarette;
And we never questioned more his right to love the
fair Lynette.

THE DAWN

Built of the blood-stain of battles
Over the body of night;
Born of God's peace in the heavens;
Mated with strength in the fight;

Coming like balm to the wounded,
And to the famished like bread;
Coming like life to the dying,
And like heaven to the dead!

Rise, O ye billions of people,
Stretching your arms out to God!
Dawn is come over the hilltop;
Flowers are sprung from the sod!

CIVILIZATION

Civilization, what shall we do
With the years that move so slow?
Men were as wise and as kind and as true
Over a thousand years ago.

Young people loved and old people dreamed;
Vagabonds stole and the vain made show;
Philanthropists gave and optimists beamed—
Over a thousand years ago.

What are your engines? What are your creeds?
What have you gained by the things that you know?
Vice and poverty, stones and weeds—
Of more than a thousand years ago.

WAR

The God, Mars, found the world in the infinite space,
And unsheathed his tremendous, unmerciful sword;
And he opened its bosom, disfigured its face,
And he left it to writhe with a blasphemous word.

AFTER THE BATTLE

Upon the vast corpse-ridden battlefield,
Here thousands upon thousands lie in death.
I shame to breathe, where many lips are sealed,
Yet silence clarions my gentle breath,
My wounded heart may nevermore be healed.

The disappointed heavens softly weep,
Rain tears on harvest of deserted vice.
These fallen heroes know eternal sleep,
Their ghastly faces cold as winter's ice
And paler than the moon—a stiffened heap.

Here once the sabers flashed beneath God's sun,
The rifles spit their spiteful, fatal lead;
Here roaring giant cannon scath have done—
Like scythes have mowed the field and left the dead—
While all this—saw above the Holy One.

Black horror, still abroad upon the field,
Recounts how former brothers slew their own;
How guiltless soldiers in the camp have kneeled
Before their God, and prayed in sacred tone,
And rose and battled with a conscience healed.

I gaze upon dead blossoms, red and blue,
Bestrewn so pitifully at my feet,
Endeared with helpless tears of matin dew;

The youngest, withered, but at peace, seem sweet.
I pray for fear we know Lord what we do!

FRIENDSHIP

When the world turns it back on your heart and your
hand,
And you're shipwrecked when just within sight of the
land,
There is nothing to help, nor ever amend,
Save a word and a look from the heart of a friend.

THE SEA

Thou rumbling, roaring sea!
Thou dumb and silent sea!
Thou cruel beating sea!
Thou soft caressing sea!
Thou rough and ready sea!
Thou smooth and tender sea!
Thou troubled, anguished sea!
Thou care-free, gleeful sea!
Thou restless, fretful sea!
Thou still and placid sea!
Thou tempestuous, furied sea!
Thou calm and quiet sea!
Thou powerful, mighty sea!
Thou tossed and helpless sea!
Thou bright and cheerful sea!
Thou dark and brooding sea!
Thou wide and wakeful sea!
Thou deep and dreamy sea!
Thou heaving, breathing sea!
Thou glassy, deathly sea!
Thou companionable sea!
Thou lone and moody sea!
Thou complicated sea!
Thou one and simple sea!
Thou *human* sea!

THE COURSE OF DIANA

Diana arose on the eastern way
With hair of gold.
All night on a roseate cloud she lay,
So I've been told;
And her smiles were the lights of the dawning day
That in heaven unfold.

Diana appeared in the orient,
Blushing above;
And, lifting her spear aloft, she went
Through heaven's grove;
For she knew every star in the firmament
Where she loved to rove.

Swiftly she ran through the realms of the sky,
Her maidens behind.
But one went before, and her feet seemed to fly
On the wings of the wind.
Triumphant she blew a trumpeting cry,
And her dogs leapt around her exultingly high,
And yelped and whined.

All mounted the sky to the top of its dome,
And descended once more
To the end of the ways, where they ceased to roam,
And stopped before

The door of a palace, the goddess's home;
And downward bore
To the foot of the great marble steps of her home.
And the night came on, but no moon up-clomb,
For the hunt was o'er.

HERE'S TO WOMAN

I will banish woes and pains!
Here's to Cupid's bow and dart!
Drink the wine within your veins
From the goblet of your heart!

Venus is a lovely star;
She shall sparkle in our wine!
What care I, Life, what you are,
Just so long as love is mine?

Let me drown the world in bliss!
What care I for gold or fame?
There is glory in a kiss,
And a song in just a name.

Here's to every pretty face
That is in the wide world round!
May we drink to woman's grace
In our coffins underground!

THE BALLET

What pains do lurk behind their twinkling feet!
What tears are rainbowed in their struggling smiles!
What stories live amid their inward depths!
What problems rival Euclid's marveled ones!
What tragedies, like clouds, float in the light!
What disappointments met with as they skip!
What sadness in their joyous melody!
'Tis this we call the care-free ballet.

MY LOVE

My love is tender as the flower
That lives when it is young,
And dies when night begins to lower,
And all the birds have sung;
Yet lasting as the ancient bowlder,
And old as tales that are told;—
Or perhaps my love is even older
Than love itself is old.

THE FOOL

If you should like to go to school,
Be not ashamed to be a fool;
For he, who never fool has been,
Shall not the best from wisdom glean.

THE PERFECT DAY

The clouds are like the lustrous sea-shells light,
That tossed upon the golden beaches lie;
The air is clear, and fresh, and glad, and bright;
And over us there is a painted sky.

The elemental forms a perfect whole,
And flowers bloom and blush, for it is May;
But God! I wish that each unhappy soul
Were just as perfect as this perfect day!

THE MAIDEN OF THE SPRING

Laughingly elated, Spring had decorated
All the bare, immodest wood,
Scattering her flowers to the sportive hours
In her bloom of maidenhood.

Like small buds appearing, her young mouth endearing
Puckered upwards to be kissed;
And like a drooping blossom, her distracted bosom
Quivered under shreds of mist.

TAKE ME AWAY

Take me away from the wild, wailing sea
To a mountain flower or woodland tree,
Or bear me in triumph from wild, warring waves
To the cold gray rocks and the ruggedest caves
On the top of a mountain, next to the sky,
Where the laziest clouds below me lie—
Where the moon and the planets and all things that
shine,
With the thunder and lightning and spaces, are mine;
And I'll dream on the great world of men far below—
Of their cities, and gold, and the little they know.

HEREAFTER

Lord, shall our hammers break the rocks,
  While old tools in the graveyard lie?
Or shall we play on golden harps,
  And waste time endless in the sky?

LOVE'S UNION

If your lips were in a garden
Where the fairest roses grew,
I should find them in a thousand,
For I love the lips of you.

If your tears lay in the flowers
That had caught the morning dew,
I should know them from the dewdrops,
For I love the tears of you.

If your hair among the sunshine
Like a golden tempest blew,
I should tell it from the sunshine,
For I love the hair of you.

If your love with mine were mingled,
I for once should hesitate,
For your love from mine I never
Could consent to separate.

THE CYCLE

April is a maiden weeping.
May shall kiss away her tears.
From the womb of Mother Winter
Spring, the child of Hope, appears.

THE ROSE AND THE THORN

Rose, you are my lady's lips.
Let me kiss you tenderly.
Thorn, you are my lady's *no*
Sticking in the heart of me.

Rose, I'll pluck you from your stem;
Leave you in the dust to die.
Thorn, I'll pull you from my heart
Where so painfully you lie.

JUSTICE

Justice call ye this fool who wears a crown?
The hand that wields a scepter feeds a clown!
And is he sovereign of every nation,
This dupe, this king of wrong and devastation?
Heaven omnipotent, dethrone the clown,
And raise a monarch to become the crown!

THE VOYAGE

Billows leap in ecstasy,
Tumbling on the ragged shore;
Break their joy upon the rocks;
Backward to the ocean pour.

Azure is the quiet sky;
Bluer the unquiet sea,
Where the little gnomes in white
Dance and caper fitfully.

Like a snowdrop in the sky,
Down from heaven to the sea,
Falls the sea-gull on the wing,
Thrilled to feel that he is free.

I shall take this pretty shell,
Made of turquoise and of pearl,
For my bark, and for my sail
Shall a fairy cloud unfurl.

Fair as magic on the wave,
So will I sail out to sea
In my little craft of dreams,
With the sea-gulls over me.

As I ride the vacant main,
And the harbor seems a toy,

Once more in the world of play
I will be a care-free boy.

When the hills fade, as in sleep,
Into shores of memories,
I shall then be left alone
'Mid the mountains of the seas.

Then the sea-gulls shall return
To the fond ones left at home
With last messages of love
From this heart that longed to roam.

THE WAVE AND THE SEA

I love the freedom of the sea,
But not its vast monotony.
I'd rather roll on like a wave
Than be an ocean grand and grave.

OVERHEARD IN THE ROSE ARBOR

O let me near! Aye, let me near to thee!
The music of thy voice is dear to me.
So sang the nightingale till bloomed the rose,
His breast against the paining thorn pressed close;
So purls the bubbling brook within the wood,
And murmur zephyrs in the verdant wood.

O let me near! Please let me near to thee!
The dreaming of thine eyes is dear to me.

Love, let me drown within their depths fore'er
And fade so far away (I care not where),
Oh! somewhere, somehow—into vagrant dreams—
Oh! anywhere, where there are vagrant dreams!
O let me nearer! Let me near to thee!

Thy lips—thy carmine lips are dear to me;
Thy petals pucker in inviting poses;
I'd pick them out among a thousand roses.
Sweet, I entreat! I supplicate for this,
I ask if you will give me just a kiss!

NATURE'S FAREWELL

A zephyr came and whispered in my ear;
A flower of the morning shed a tear;
A wide field waved; a forest seemed to sigh;
And all of nature tried to say goodbye.

TO A LADY'S EYES

Your eyes are infinite as the skies.
  How shallow is the sea!
And when I pray, your sweet blue eyes
  Are heaven unto me.

Oh, when I raise my eyes above,
  My prayers do not come true;
But when your heart is full of love,
  I find my God in you.

SPAIN

Spain, would beneath thy tropic stars again
I twanged a sad guitar, and sang of love,
Inspired by Conchita's eyes above;
Or lay beneath thy lazy sun, O Spain,
And listened to thy music's soft refrain!
Again might I through streets of Cadiz rove,
Suck juicy fruit within an orange grove,
Or tramp on through the saturating rain;
Roam o'er gay Seville at the mid-night hour,
Surprise a slumbering maiden in her bower,
Or watch the stars smile on Giralda tower!
Might I but kiss the red lips of a dream;
Capture a fanciful, evasive gleam,
Guadalquivir, beside thy muddy stream!

THE SERENADER

SCENE: *A Balcony.*
PLACE: *Spain.*
TIME: *Moonlight.*

(FELIPE *is singing to the accompaniment of a guitar.* CONCHITA *opens her balcony window and flings a rose to him. He stoops to rescue the flower, and presses it to his lips.*)

FELIPE

It smells so sweet; feels tender as your lips.
The thief! It stole the blushes from your cheek!
It lives but briefly as my heart's vain hopes—
A fair deceiver, transient as my dreams.
Is this your love that you have flung to me?
It is a passing fancy; soon it dies.
A dead stone might mark out a grave for me,
But this shall fade and dwindle to decay.

CONCHITA

It is a kiss that fades upon the lips—
That dies, but never is forgotten—never!
I can not give my love. You had it always.
When you have held me in your arms, oh then!
I've heard my own heart beating in your breast.

Felipe, say how dared you come tonight
To sing sad songs beneath my balcony?
You open up an old wound in my heart,
And blind my eyes with long-imprisoned tears.
Did you not for me fear my father's wrath?
Have you no care for his terrific storms,
That are assuaged not till the rain is spent?
No clouds dissemble that the sun may shine
When you are in the flashing of my father's eye.

FELIPE

I have been notified of his departure
By your old nurse, Maria—reverent soul.
There came a knocking on my garret door,
And in flew old Maria out of breath
Before I had arisen from my desk.
Her hair had been dishevelled and the tears
Rolled down the pale and wrinkled cheek.
I feared that you were ill, and scarce could moan,
So overwrought was I with ill-forebodings.
But what to my surprise did she let out
On gaining breath, but tidings of great joy.
Your father had left to be gone three days,
And you remained behind alone, she said;
So I might come and sing songs long suppressed.
That is the reason you have heard my voice
Tremble and faint beneath the balcony,
While you smiled at your image in the glass.

CONCHITA

You do me wrong, suggesting I have time
For vanity, with all my thoughts on you.
Is that the woman you profess to love?
A vain and silly minx, who spends her love
Upon the face within her boudoir glass?
Felipe, shame on you for shallowness!
Is my love deeper than the mighty sea?
Has it not lived as long? Love, answer me!

FELIPE

So you have told me; therefore so it is,
For you have not a tongue that glibly lies.
If your love is at all akin to mine,
It is as infinite as the universe.
My love extends beyong Conception's eye;
It strides unchanged through palace halls, my love,
And unaffected shares the woodman's fire;
Or stands oblivious in a den of thieves.
My love may launch itself upon the sea,
And brave the fiercest squalls and hurricanes;
Sail round the world, returning home unharmed.
It has a heavenly semblance always on,
And like an angel walks unscorched through hell.
Come down, Conchita, from your balcony.
Up there you seem too like a foreign star,
A star I have desired and can not reach.
Come down, Conchita, come to me my love!

For I would know that you are not a light,
Near only to the angels in the sky;
For I would feel your hand, and kiss your lips,
And prove that you are not a gleam—but mine!

CONCHITA

And I too would descend to be with you,—
And prove that you are not a glowworm's light,
A spark of passion flitting on the grass.
If I might feel your breath upon my cheek,
Then I would know our love is not a dream.
(*She throws him a kiss and disappears.*)

FELIPE

Oh, why was I not born a different man,
Not just Felipe, for what are his dreams?
They are the blood out of his stupid heart,
His bitter disappointments, masked desires;
His ill-starred life, his worship of a woman;
All that which he was, is and soon shall be.
Such comedies are poor Felipe's dreams!
He is a vender of such things, this fool.
He is a clown behind four dirty walls.
He lives on bread, but fain would eat his dreams.
He drinks plain water, but he might prefer
To spend a drunken night in swilling fancies.
For what is this Felipe but a poet!

(*Reappearing below.*)
So sad a face is not becoming. Smile!
I am so happy to be loved by you.
Why do you not rejoice in love with me?
But I forget that my Felipe is
A poet, and he mourns the death of dreams.
Yet sometimes fools are wiser than the wise.
'Twould do you well to listen now to me.
Life is a dream. We die, but life lives on.
Lovers expire. The dream of love does not.—
How can you mourn the death of what you dream?
You are more transient than your fantasies,
Since you are sure to die while they still live.
Your dreams are stars that light eternity.
When God is dead, who can not die, your dreams,
The stars, shall cease to shine upon the earth.

FELIPE

If I but had your wisdom, or had you
My talent, either you or I would be
The greatest poet that has ever lived.
Still, as it is, my poems are part you,
And part the sad heart that you stole from me.
You are the match that starts the chimney's blaze.
My heart is that which has been set on fire.

CONCHITA

I am your inspiration then, am I?
What have I inspired you of late to write?
I hope it is glad as my love for you.
I look into my glass and see my faults.
You gaze at me and see but poetry.
Mine 's keener penetration, I believe.
Read me a poem, for it flatters me.
Ah, may you never know me as I am!
For then you would no longer care for me.
Let's hear what this unworthy one inspires.

FELIPE

(*Unfolding a piece of paper.*)

Were these lines half so beautiful as you,
You might not read them, you should so adore.
They 're tunes that sing unheard within the soul;—
They 're bars that have escaped a broken heart,
And sunk to words upon a paper sheet;
They 're sentiments in chains, and tears unwept,
And more like miserable me than you,
With inspiration fairer than the muse.
And yet I know, because your eyes are kind,
That you will praise them and believe in me.
Because you love me, you love my verse,
And read it with a magnifying glass.
Now that I have made my apology,

Please let me dote on your romantic eyes,
So love, and not I, may recite to you.
(*Reads*)—

Some dewy night when you are sound asleep,
And the moon-witch casts her spells on grass and bush;
Some balmy midnight when wild waters rush,
Playing Pan's music in the forest deep,
And all the stars like golden fishes leap
Out of the sky's dark sea,—then you shall blush
In sleep; and turning over moaning, crush
Your pretty gown, and dream on in a heap.
For ere the moon has fallen from the sky,
I'll catch the dreams that twinkle in the grass
Like glowworms gold, and on their million wings
Right through the window of your chamber fly;
And, hovering near you, like a soft breeze pass,
And kiss you madly till my bosom sings!

CONCHITA

And kiss me madly till your bosom sings?
Ah, do!
(*They kiss.*)
I feel as though my heart sang so,
It burst within my breast. Alas! dear kiss
That does demand the price of a broken heart!

Conchita, might I lease a winged cloud,
Would you consent to fly away with me
And build a fog hut in a misty vale?
Come, bargain with the angels for a star,
Where you and I may dwell, love, undisturbed.
Or would you have this rose a secret tell?
The road that leads to romance and the rainbow
This rose must know. It came from where? You'll say
Out of the ground. But ere it grew on earth
It bloomed within a garden of the sky,
Between the sunshine and departing storm.
Let us in one anothers arms fall fast
Asleep, within a cave up in the moon,
And wake 'mong dreams, the moon's inhabitants.
Or shall we kiss within a poppy field
And feel the languidness of opium?
But I have yet a better plan to tell.
What say you to a cabin in a wood
Beside a singing waterfall that leaps
For ages to a sleepless stream below?
The birds shall call, "Awake!" at every dawn,
And winds shall whisper, "Sleep," at eventide.
The moon shall shine in through the window, love,
On you and me (your husband) at the hearth;
And we shall thank the Christ that we have loved.
So I have dreamed within my garret room,
And in my heart sung silent songs of joy.

I do believe these dreams may yet come true,
For I had a cousin kind enough
To die and leave me something in his will,
Who having never known me well enough
Either to be my friend or enemy,
But being poor enough to pity me,
Has therefore left me everything he had.

WEARY OF THE WORLD

Of the world I was weary, and wanted to die
And forget the tear and the heavy sigh.
I was bored with life, and I wanted to lie
In the dust with the dead in their graves close by.

I had ceased to care for the fruit of the tree;
I had listened too long to the roar of the sea,
And lost interest even in dreams to be;
Nothing was worth the struggle to me.

But out of a night of despair, Hope flew—
And like a new birth came a wish to do,
And begin life over, for love is true—
And the woman who brought me love was you.

L'ENVOI

The book is closed upon the knee;
The hearth's flames flicker low and die;
Still may a glow of memory—
Awhile amid the ashes lie.

Now place the volume on the shelf,
And turn to leave it with a sigh,
While memory, like a phantom elf,
Round and round us seems to fly.

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